

REMARKS

Claims 2-20 are pending. Claims 7 and 8 previously were withdrawn such that claims 2-6 and 9-20 are currently at issue.

Claim 17 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. Claim 17 is amended to recite the skeleton being free of drilled openings for receiving fasteners for supporting the holding part in substantially fixed relation thereto. The application specifies that the prior art included the possibility of drilling into the skeleton for screw mounting of build-on parts thereto (paragraph [0005], lines 1-2 thereof), and that the present invention avoids the need to drill into the steering wheel skeleton (paragraph [0008], lines 5-9 thereof; and paragraph [0016]). Accordingly, the rejection of claim 17 based on failure to comply with the written description requirement is believed to be overcome.

Claims 2-6, 9, 11-13, and 15-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as anticipated by U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0124682 to Schutz. Claims 2, 3, 10, 14, and 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,312,012 to Bohn, et al.

The rejections, as they may apply to the claims presented herein are respectfully traversed.

Claim 16 is directed to a steering wheel including a skeleton and foam material surrounding the skeleton. Claim 16 is amended to call for a holding part that is fixed relative to the skeleton by the foam material so that a first portion of the holding part is fixed within the foam material against removal therefrom and a second portion of the holding part projects therefrom for mounting of build-on parts thereto. None of the cited art discloses or suggests the holding part of amended claim 16.

More particularly, both Schutz and Bohn, et al. are directed to guide assemblies that are specifically intended for allowing the assemblies to shift in the foam


material for horn actuation operations. In Schutz, the guide assemblies include bolt guides 32 that move downwards through the associated bushes 42 when the cap is pushed for horn actuation. Referring to FIG. 2 of Bohn, et al., it can be seen that the blind holes 9' are provided with clearance below the thickened portions 26 of the mounting studs 10 so that when the cover cap 6 is pushed downward for horn actuation, the mounting studs 10 along with their thickened portions 26 can also be shifted downwardly in the foam material. Thus, neither Schutz or Bohn, et al. teach a holding part including a first portion that is fixed within the foam material as recited in amended claim 16. Moreover, it is clear that both the bushes 42 of Schutz and the mounting studs 10 including the portions 26 of Bohn, et al. could be easily removed from the foam material by pulling them out from their respective openings in the same manner by which they were inserted therein. By contrast, claim 16 requires that the first portion of the holding part be fixed within the foam material against removal therefrom. Accordingly, it is believed claim 16, and claims 2-6, 9-15, and 17-20 which depend cognately therefrom, are allowable over the relied upon art.

Based on the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of claims 2-6 and 9-20 are respectfully requested.

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Respectfully submitted,

By: _____



Stephen S. Favakeh
Registration No. 36,798

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FITCH, EVEN, TABIN & FLANNERY
120 South LaSalle, Suite 1600
Chicago, Illinois 60603-3406
Telephone: 312/577-7000
Facsimile: 312/577-7007